

APPLICATION

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TITLE: INTEGRATED RADIO FREQUENCY CIRCUITS

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INTEGRATED RADIO FREQUENCY CIRCUITS

This is a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application serial number 09/948,271 filed September 6, 2001, which is a continuation in part of U.S. patent application serial no. 09/792,848 filed February 23, 2001, which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application serial number 09/596,486 filed June 19, 2000, which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application serial number 09/580,713, filed May 30, 2000.

Background

This invention relates generally to radio frequency (RF) integrated circuits that include active devices and passive components such as inductors and capacitors used for radio frequency devices such as cellular telephones and wireless network devices such as Bluetooth and other wireless devices and personal digital assistants.

The technology for manufacturing integrated circuits has conventionally divided integrated circuits into various categories based on the compatibility of processes and other considerations. Generally, radio frequency circuits have not been mixed with logic circuits in the same integrated circuit. Radio frequency circuits are analog circuits that are involved in filtering and detecting radio frequency signals such as cellular telephone signals. In

contrast, logic circuits generally include transistors and other active components that form digital integrated circuit devices. Thus, for example, bipolar techniques may be utilized to manufacture radio frequency circuits and standard complementary metal oxide semiconductor (CMOS) processes may be utilized to manufacture logic circuits.

Memory circuits may account for still another category. Generally, special processes may be utilized in connection with the manufacture of memory circuits because of special design considerations such as multiple gate electrodes and special voltage supply needs. Thus, memory circuits are often fabricated separately from logic circuits.

Still another category are the so-called mixed signal circuits that may include both digital and analog components. These signals too may be accounted for separately so that a device that includes RF signal processing, RF integrated circuits, mixed signal circuits, logic circuits and memory circuits may be made up of a number of separately fabricated integrated circuit chips.

The cost of an electronic device may be closely correlated to the extent of integration that is possible. The more devices and the more types of devices that can be integrated into a single integrated circuit and manufactured using highly replicated techniques, the lower the resulting price. Unfortunately, because of

incompatibilities between the different types of integrated circuits, it has not been possible, to date, to fabricate both radio frequency circuits, mixed signal circuits, logic circuits and memory circuits all on the same standard CMOS
5 integrated circuit process.

One problem that arises in connection with radio frequency circuits in CMOS processes is that the passive components such as capacitors and inductors may be adversely affected by the substrates over which they are
10 formed. In particular, coupling may occur between the substrate and integrated circuit inductors for example. This coupling may result in degraded performance of inductive circuits. As a result, inductive circuits may be formed in bipolar or silicon over insulator (SOI)
15 integrated circuits rather than using standard CMOS logic processes. Thus, two or more integrated circuits are needed--one for logic, one for RF circuits, one for memory, and one for mixed signals.

Some efforts have been made to overcome this coupling
20 problem. For example, Silicon Wave Inc. has devised a so-called silicon over insulator (SOI) BiCMOS (Bipolar CMOS) integrated circuit that integrates both logic and radio frequency components onto the same die. However, the use of silicon over insulator technology greatly complicates
25 the manufacturing process and increases cost. Moreover, the bulk of semiconductor fabrication facilities in the

United States and the rest of the world are dedicated to manufacturing metal oxide semiconductor technologies. The SOI process is not amenable to widespread manufacturing at a number of highly expensive, already existent, fabrication facilities.

Another problem that arises in integrating radio frequency components with other devices is the need to include on chip logic circuits. These logic circuits may include processor or other devices utilized in some cases to control the overall radio frequency integrated circuit. Because of impact ionization and other causes, including the high switching speeds encountered in some logic circuits, the logic circuits may generate noise that may adversely effect the operation of on chip radio frequency components.

Thus, there is a need for ways to integrate both radio frequency and logic circuits on the same chip.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Figure 1 is a depiction of the various families of integrated circuit technologies that may be fabricated on the same integrated circuit in accordance with embodiments of the present invention;

Figure 2 is a block depiction of a cellular telephone in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 3 is a block diagram of a Bluetooth transceiver in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 4 is a greatly enlarged cross-sectional view of an inductive circuit element in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention;

5 Figure 5 is a greatly enlarged top plan view of an inductive element in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 6 is an equivalent circuit of the inductive element shown in Figures 4 and 5;

10 Figure 7 is a perspective view of an embodiment of the inductive element shown in Figure 5;

Figures 8A and 8B are top plan views of two different layers of an inductive element that may be used in the present invention;

15 Figure 9 is an enlarged cross-sectional view of still another embodiment of an inductive element that may be utilized in connection with the present invention;

Figure 10 is a perspective view of the inductive element shown in Figure 9;

20 Figure 11 is a top plan view of layer one in the embodiment shown in Figure 9;

Figure 12 is top plan view of layer two in the embodiment shown in Figure 9;

Figure 13 is a top plan view of layer three in the embodiment shown in Figure 9;

Figure 14 is a front elevational view of the combined effect of the layers one through three in forming an inductive element;

5 Figure 15 is a top plan view of another embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 16 is a plot of concentration versus distance in accordance with one exemplary embodiment of the present invention;

10 Figure 17 is an enlarged, cross-sectional depiction of an embodiment in the prior art;

Figure 18 is a plot of concentration versus distance into the substrate in the embodiment shown in Figure 17;

15 Figure 19 is a cross sectional depiction of an integrated circuit that has been greatly enlarged, in accordance with one embodiment to the present invention;

Figure 20 is a layout in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention of the circuit shown in Figure 19;

20 Figure 21 is a block depiction of one embodiment of the integrated circuit shown in Figures 19 and 20;

Figure 22 is an enlarged cross-sectional depiction of another embodiment of the present invention; and

Figure 23 is an enlarged cross-sectional depiction of another embodiment of the present invention.

Detailed Description

Referring to Figure 1, an integrated circuit 10 may include analog circuit elements operating above 100 megahertz, such as RF components 12, mixed signal components 14 and logic and memory components 16, all integrated within the same monolithic integrated circuit. Coupling between the radio frequency circuit elements, such as inductors, capacitors and transistors and the substrate can be reduced, if not effectively eliminated, by creating an effective reverse biased diode between the radio frequency component and the substrate. This reverse biased diode may be formed using a triple well fabrication process in which an inductive circuit element and a transistor are formed over separate triple wells.

In addition, memory components such as flash memory and static random access memory (SRAM) may be made on the same process, in the same substrate, utilized to form logic circuits such as microprocessors and digital signal processors. For example, the processes disclosed in U.S. Patents 5,926,418 and 5,867,425, assigned to the assignee of the present application, may be utilized to form both logic devices and flash memory.

A radio frequency transceiver useful in a cellular telephone 10a, shown in Figure 2, includes an antenna 18, a radio frequency section 20, a logic section 22, a memory 26, and an interface 24. The interface 24 provides the

graphical user interfaces that may be displayed on display screens to implement the functions of the cellular telephone 10a. The logic circuit 22 may also include a microprocessor that operates using a memory 26. In one
5 embodiment of the present invention, the memory 26 is a flash memory. The radio frequency section 20 may include a number of passive components including inductive circuits.

The radio frequency section 20 as well as the antenna 18 may be formed using integrated circuit techniques to
10 create a single integrated circuit that includes all of the components 18, 20, 22, 24, and 26, in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention. In other embodiments, some but not all of the analog and digital components may be fabricated on the same integrated circuit chip.

15 Generally, complementary metal oxide semiconductor techniques may be utilized to form all of the components depicted in Figure 2 on a single chip. However, in some cases, particular components may be split among two or more integrated circuits. However, the designer is free to
20 position particular components on particular integrated circuits based on design considerations rather than process and technology incompatibilities. Again, the problem of coupling of unwanted signals to the RF components included in the radio frequency section 20 may be avoided by forming
25 an effective reverse biased diode in the common substrate utilized to form all the components of the telephone 10a.

Similarly, an integrated transceiver 10b for a wireless network, for example in accordance with the Bluetooth specification may be fabricated using the same principles. The Bluetooth transceiver 10b includes an antenna 28 coupled to a radio 30. The radio 30 is coupled to a link baseband controller or link controller 32. A central processor unit 34 couples an interface 36 and a memory 38. In some embodiments of the present invention, the memory 38 may be a flash memory. All of the components may be integrated into a single chip in one embodiment.

An integrated radio frequency (RF) element 40 that may be utilized in connection with the RF section 20 or the radio 30 of the embodiments of Figures 2 and 3 or any other integrated circuit using an inductive element, is shown in Figure 4. In this case, a triple well is defined within the substrate 42 by a P-well 46, a deep N-well 44, and the P-type substrate 42. The P-well 46 is a well or tub within the deep N-well 44.

Two reverse biased pn junctions are created, one by the juxtaposition of the P-well 46 and N-well 44, and another by the juxtaposition of the P-type substrate 42 and the N-well 44. Both pn junctions may be biased by a potential V_b on the N-well 44. For example, if the P-well 46 and P-type substrate 42 are grounded, increasing the bias potential on the N-well 44 increases the bias on each

junction. In some embodiments, if the N-well 44 is biased, the P-well 46 floats.

Depletion regions are formed by the junction bias, adding a depletion capacitance across the pn junctions
5 between the P-well 46 and N-well 44 and between the N-well 44 and the P-type substrate 42. These depletion capacitances can be reduced by increasing the bias across the pn junctions. The higher the junction bias, the more reduction in the junction capacitance, reducing the total
10 capacitance. Reducing total capacitance reduces the capacitive coupling of the RF circuits to the substrate and the self-resonance frequency of the inductive element 40. The reverse biased junctions reduce the coupling of noise or other unwanted signals between the substrate 42 and the
15 RF integrated circuit components, formed over the substrate 42, such as the inductive element 50.

The layer 54 is conventionally formed of an oxide. Of course, the present invention is equally applicable to multi-layer metal processes in which the passive
20 components, such as the inductive element 50, are formed in any desired metal layer.

In one embodiment, a triple well guard ring 55 may encircle the N-well 44. The guard ring 55 receives a contact for supplying the bias potential V_B .

25 The techniques for forming triple wells are well known. For example, U.S. Patents 5,926,418 and 5,867,425

(assigned to the assignee of the present application)
provide an explanation of exemplary processes for forming a
triple well. The triple well process is equally applicable
to manufacturing flash memory devices. By using the triple
5 well process, a flash memory may be formed in the same
integrated circuit with logic family components such as
processors and digital signal processors.

In one embodiment of the present invention, the N-well
44 may be formed by forming a deep N-well using a high
10 energy implant. The resulting N-well extends generally
parallel to the surface of the substrate 42. Thereafter,
implanted N-wells may be formed to join up with each
lateral edge of the deep N-well and to extend upwardly to
the surface of the substrate 42. The lower the resistivity
15 of the N-wells, the better the shielding of the resulting
structure. Generally, the resistivity may be lowered by
increasing the concentration of the dopant used to form the
N-well 44.

Referring next to Figure 5, the inductive element 50
20 may be formed of a planar, spiral-shaped layer defined over
the substrate 42, for example atop an oxide layer 54.
Conventionally, the inductive element 50 is formed by
patterning and deposition techniques. However, any
technique for forming the inductive element 50 may be
25 utilized. The resulting structure may be formed of a
spiral-shaped flat ribbon that may include a plurality of

interconnected straight sections such as the sections 58a and 58b. Advantageously, the element 50 is positioned over the P-well 46 of the triple well 40. Appropriate electrical connections may be made through various layers to electrically couple the ends of the inductive element 50 to the rest of the integrated circuit.

Alternatively a non-planar design may be used as shown in Figure 7 and as described, for example in U.S. Patent 5,545,916 to Koullias. The spiral inductive element 50, shown in Figure 5, may have a non-planar cross-section as indicated in Figure 7 including a rectangular portion 70 and a circular portion 72. Each of the trace elements 58c and 58d are arranged such that the material thickness favors the innermost edge "O". Thus, the trace shown in Figure 7 is from the left side of the spiral inductive element 50 (shown in Figure 5). The material is added close to an edge "O" where the current may flow at higher frequencies.

As another alternative, the spiral inductive element 50 may have a non-rectangular configuration such as the multilevel, multi-element polygonal design, for example, as set forth in U.S. Patent 5,559,360, and as shown in Figure 8. Referring to Figure 8A, the layer with wires A_1 through A_{10} has a first end A that is designated by the connective structure CON1. A group of ten connective wires, A_1' , A_2' , A_{10}' , are shown in the center of the spiral. The wires B_1 - B_{10}

of the second layer, shown in Figure 8B, are centrally connected to the wires A_1 through A_{10} inverse sequentially. The output of the spiral inductive element is identified as a parallel connection CON2 in Figure 8B that forms the parallel connections of all the elements of the B level. Through the use of multiple parallel conductive elements arranged on the substrate (in lieu of a single element conductive path), the resistance may be decreased and self-inductance increases. The decreased resistance and increased inductance may result in an improved quality factor (Q).

A multi-layer non-planar integrated inductor design, as shown in Figures 9 through 14, may also be used as the inductive element 50 (Figure 5), as described in U.S. Patent 6,008,102. A series of three conductive layers one, two, and three, are progressively coated one on top of another as shown in Figure 9. The three layers combine to form an integrated helical coil as shown in Figure 14. The first layer is formed of a conductive material in the shape shown in Figure 11, the second layer is formed of a conductive material in the shape shown in Figure 12 and the third layer is formed of conductive in the shape shown in Figure 13. The net effect of the three layers is the coil shown in Figure 14. The angular coil 450, shown in Figure 10, has a series of multiple loops that are set perpendicularly to the plane of the substrate.

Referring again to Figure 9, a layer 304 is coated over a passivated wafer. The layer 304 may be formed of a conductive material such as titanium-tungsten (TiW) to form a barrier layer and provide for the adhesion of a subsequently sputtered layer of copper 306. An initial photoresist layer 406 and a second photoresist 408 define the intervening conductive material. The layer 414 may be a sputtered conductor, and a layer 420 is a third layer of plated metal while the material 416 may be photoresist.

An equivalent circuit, shown in Figure 6, for the inductive element 50 (Figure 5) includes an inductance 62a that may arise from all or any part of the spiral-shaped inductive element 50. The inductive element 50 may also be represented by resistance 62b that arises from the natural resistance of the material utilized to form the spiral-shaped inductive element 50. A capacitance 64 arises from the capacitance between the inductive element 50 (or any other RF component such as transistors and capacitors) and the substrate 42 and particularly by the intervening dielectric layer 54. An additional resistance 66a may arise from the material utilized to form the P-well 46.

The effect of the pn junction created by the P-well 46 and the N-well 44 is represented by the diode 66b and the effect of the pn junction created by the N-well 44 and P-type substrate 42 is represented by the diode 66c. The

capacitance 67b and the diode 66c reduce the coupling from the substrate 42 back to the inductor 50.

5 The reverse biased diode 66b, oriented oppositely to the diode 66c, reduces the inductive element 50 capacitive coupling losses to the substrate 42. Through the creation of the diode 66c, an effectively infinite resistance is created to reduce interference by substrate signals with the element 50 (and any other RF circuits). In particular, the inductive element 50 may be a highly tuned element that
10 may be adversely affected by noise and other unwanted signals present in the substrate 42. These signals may be present in the substrate 42 due to the formation of a wide variety of other circuit elements in the same integrated circuit. These unwanted signals are isolated from the
15 sensitive inductive element 50 by the reverse biased diode 66c.

As a result, a variety of different circuit types, including radio frequency circuit elements, mixed signal circuit elements, logic elements and memory elements,
20 including flash memory elements, may all be formed in the same integrated circuit in the same substrate 42. Therefore, greater integration is possible and more efficient and lower cost radio frequency devices, such as Bluetooth transceivers and cellular telephones wireless
25 local area networks, may be fabricated.

The benefits of the triple well can be further appreciated by comparing a triple well approach to an approach in which a single well such as a deep N-well is utilized below the inductive element 50. The impedance
 5 caused by the deep N-well, in a deep N-well embodiment, may be represented by the value R_w . The total impedance, Z , from the inductive element 50 to the substrate then may be represented by the equation:

$$Z = R_w + \frac{1}{j\omega C_w}$$

10 where C is the capacitance resulting from the oxide between the inductive element 50 and the substrate and the capacitance of the substrate and ω is the frequency. Similarly, the total capacitance, C_w , for the series, is expressed as follows:

$$\frac{1}{C_w} = \frac{1}{C_{ox}} + \frac{1}{C_{sub}}$$

15 where C_{ox} is the capacitance due to the dielectric between the inductive element 50 and the substrate and C_{sub} is the capacitance between the inductive element 50 and the substrate.

20 In contrast the total impedance, Z_T , of the triple well is expressed as (indicated as 64 follows:

$$Z_T = R_j + \frac{1}{j\omega C_T}$$

where R_j is the resistance 66a of the N-well, P substrate and embedded P well and C_T is the capacitance of the triple well (indicated as 64 in Figure 6).

5 Similarly, the series capacitance created by the triple well, C_T , is as follows:

$$\frac{1}{C_T} = \frac{1}{C_{ox}} + \frac{1}{C_j} + \frac{1}{C_{SUB}}$$

10 where C_{ox} is the capacitance 64 due to the oxide between the inductive element 50 and the substrate, C_j is the capacitance 67a arising from the junction between the P-well and the N-well and C_{SUB} is the capacitance 67b between the N-well and the substrate.

15 Since the impedance arising from the junction Z_j is much greater than the impedance without the junction, the effect of the triple well is to substantially increase the impedance compared to a single deep N-well. Moreover, the capacitance created by the triple well can be adjusted by the N-well bias to be less than the capacitance created by the deep N-well. Thus, the coupling that results from the capacitance in the triple well is significantly less.

20 Since the total impedance of the triple well is much greater than the impedance of the deep N-well and the capacitance of the triple well is less, there is less capacitive and resistive coupling to the substrate and also better noise isolation from the substrate to the RF

circuits arising from the use of the triple well compared to the use of only a deep N-well.

The self-resonance frequency may also be improved in some embodiments, by reducing the total capacitance. The self-resonance frequency is proportional to $1/LC$, so that the lower the capacitance, the higher the self-resonance frequency or the better the high frequency performance of the inductor 50. Reducing the capacitive coupling also improves the quality factor or Q of the inductor 50.

While an illustrated embodiment using a triple well is described, additional wells may be incorporated to form a series of one or more additional diodes in other embodiments.

Referring to Figure 15, in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, each of the inductors 50a, 50b and 50c may be formed over their own separate triple well whose periphery is defined by a guard ring 55a, 55b or 55c. Each inductor 50, formed as a spiral, may connect at the center to a lower metal layer and may connect on the outside to a metal layer that defines the flat spiral.

Transistors 80 may be encircled by their own separate guard rings 55d and 55e. In other words, each transistor 80 may be formed in its own separate triple well whose periphery is defined by a guard ring 55d or 55e. In this

way, the transistors 80 are isolated from noise from the underlying substrate.

A plurality of capacitors 82 may be formed over the substrate as metal to metal stacked capacitors. The
5 capacitors 82 may be formed over a field oxide 86. Thus, the capacitors 82 that may include one plate elevated above another plate may be isolated from the substrate by the field oxide 86. In some embodiments, it may not be necessary to include underlying triple well below the
10 capacitors 82. Similarly, because the resistors 88 are formed above the substrate, no triple well may be provided for the resistors 88 as well, in one embodiment.

Thus, in some embodiments of the present invention, each inductor may be formed over in its own triple well and
15 one or more transistors may be included, each in its own separate triple well. Using individual triple wells may improve the electrical performance of the isolated circuit elements.

For example, voltage controlled oscillators (VCOs) may
20 be formed in which transistors, varactors, and inductors are each formed, each over or in its own separate triple well. In some embodiments, resistors and capacitors may be formed over the substrate without an underlying triple well.

25 A hypothetical doping profile from the surface of the substrate 42, shown in Figure 4, extending through the P-

well 46, N-well 44 and down to the underlying substrate 42 is shown in Figure 16. In this example, the P-well 46 (having an illustrative depth of about 1.5 microns) has a non-retrograde or symmetrical profile and an illustrative peak concentration of 10^{17} atoms/cm³. The N-well 44 (in this example with a depth of from about 1.5 to 2.5 microns with an illustrative peak concentration of 10^{18} atoms/cm³) has a symmetrical doping profile. Finally the P-type substrate extends downwardly below the N-well 44 (and has an illustrative peak doping concentration of 10^{16} atoms/cm³).

By minimizing the doping concentration of the substrate 42 and (in fact making it conventional background doping in one example), the capacitance and the high frequency performance of the resulting product may be improved. In particular, the higher the doping concentration of the substrate 42, the lower the resistance and the better the low frequency performance. Conversely in such case, higher frequency performance may be degraded. Thus, by reducing the doping concentration in the substrate, the high frequency performance can be improved. In particular, the doping of the substrate 42 region immediately adjacent, bordering or abutting the N-well 44 may be less than that of the P-well 46.

In some cases the lower frequency performance may also be improved merely by varying the bias (V_A) applied to the

P-well 46. In other words, the higher the bias potential applied to the P-well 46, the better the high frequency performance.

5 The doping level of the P-well 46 may be just sufficient to prevent punch-through of the P-well 46 to N-well 44 junction. Only three layers may be utilized in one embodiment.

10 In an embodiment in accordance with the prior art, shown in Figures 17 and 18, a plurality of layers 135, 121, 119, 117 and 110 are utilized to provide isolation in a BiCMOS device. See U.S. patent 5,268,312 to Reuss et al. In Reuss, five separate regions are utilized and a ground shield 117 is necessary. By increasing the doping concentration of the ground shield 117, the resistance may
15 be minimized, thereby improving low frequency performance. However, since the characteristics of the device are then fixed, little or nothing can be done to improve the performance at high frequencies. In addition, the retrograde doping profile in the regions 135 and 121 is
20 needed. Separate layers must be provided to achieve the retrograde profile.

No such retrograde profile is necessary in some embodiments according to the present invention. In addition, an epitaxial layer 135 is unnecessary in the CMOS
25 structure disclosed in Figure 4.

Referring to Figure 19, an integrated circuit 200 includes a logic section 201 and a radio frequency section 203. The logic section 201 may include conventional logic transistors such as the transistor 205, which may be
5 utilized to provide conventional logic function, such as a processor or controller as one example.

In one embodiment, the logic section 201 may be utilized to control an integrated circuit 200, which has radio frequency applications. The logic section 201 may be
10 formed inside a triple well which includes a P-well 46a, an N-well 44a, and a substrate 42. A bias potential may be applied to the N-well 44a as indicated at V_{B1} . A bias potential V_A may be applied to the P-well 46a.

The arrangement of the triple well 201 may be
15 effective to prevent noise injection (indicated by arrow A) from the logic section 201 to the rest of the substrate 42 and particularly to the radio frequency section 203. This noise may be generated, for example, due to transistor 205 switching in the logic section 201.

Likewise, the radio frequency section 203 may include
20 at least one inductor 50 arranged over a P-well 46. The P-well 46 is part of a triple well including an N-well 44 and a substrate 42. As described previously and as indicated by the arrows B, the triple well is effective to prevent
25 migration of noise to or from the inductor 50 or other components in the radio frequency section 203.

In the illustrated embodiment, the N-well 44 may be subjected to a bias V_{B2} . Similarly the P-well 46 may be subjected to a bias V_A .

5 A separate voltage supply may be utilized for the logic section 201 and radio frequency section 203. This may reduce the possibility of cross talk between these sections. In particular, it may be desirable to connect V_{B1} and V_{B2} to separate pins on the integrated circuit 200 so that separate power supplies may be utilized to reduce
10 cross talk. It is not necessary that V_{B1} and V_{B2} be different voltages however. In addition, a plurality of triple wells may be utilized for a plurality of radio frequency components. In some cases those radio frequency components may use different bias voltages V_{B2} or they may
15 all use the same bias voltage V_{B2} . However, it is desirable in some embodiments, to use separate voltages V_{B1} and V_{B2} for logic and radio frequency components on the same integrated circuit 200.

20 In some embodiments, it may be desirable to use a lighter doping for the P-well 46 relative to the P-well 46a. The lighter doping may be effective in reducing eddy currents from inductive component 50. A normal doping level may be utilized for the P-well 46a in one embodiment. For example, the doping level for the P-well 46 may be
25 approximately 10^{15} while the doping level for the P-well 46a may be 10^{16} to 10^{17} atoms per cubic centimeter.

In some embodiments, the logic circuitry may use complementary metal oxide semiconductor (CMOS) technology that includes both N-channel and P-channel transistors. Of course, the P-channel transistors are not generally
5 included in triple wells while the N-channel transistors are so included. However, impact ionization that results in noise is substantially greater in the case of N-channel transistors than in P-channel transistors. Thus, the techniques described herein may be effective in reducing
10 noise injection in the substrate 42 even in embodiments where only the N-channel transistors are placed in triple wells. Radio frequency circuitry generally uses N-channel technologies and therefore, the use of triple wells may be effective.

Turning now to Figure 20, an exemplary layout for integrated circuit 200 that integrates onto one chip a radio frequency section 203, a flash memory 204, a mixed signal section 206, a random access memory (RAM) 208, and a logic section 201. In some cases, each of the sections 201
15 through 208 may utilize separate bias voltages and may be contained in separate triple wells. In some cases, individual components within any of the sections 201 through 208 may be in their own triple wells.
20

The mixed signal section 206 may include, for example,
25 digital to analog and analog to digital converters. The radio frequency section 203 may include components such as

a frequency synthesizer, a phase locked loop (PLL) device, a voltage controlled oscillator (VCO), a mixer, a power amplifier, a low noise amplifier (LNA) and clocks, as a few examples. It may be desirable to space the mixed signal section 206 from the radio frequency section 203 in some embodiments.

Of course, the layout shown in Figure 20 is simply one exemplary layout and any of a variety of layouts may be utilized. In some cases, it may be desirable to physically separate the radio frequency section 203 from the logic section 201, for example.

Turning next to Figure 21, a block depiction of a radio frequency integrated circuit 200 in accordance with one embodiment to the present invention is illustrated. In this example, a baseband controller 224 may be coupled to a receiver 216, a transmitter 218, a voltage controlled oscillator 220 and a frequency synthesizer 222. The baseband controller 224 may include logic circuitry and may be implemented by logic components as described previously. The baseband controller 224 may be coupled over a bus 226 to a flash memory 204, a RAM memory 208, and a bridge 228.

The bridge 228 may couple through a bus 230 to an input/output device 232, a group of counters and timers 234, and an interrupt controller 236. The integrated circuit 200 may include a variety of other components including a phase locked loop 212 and test circuitry 214

for example for implementing JTAG procedures. Thus, the integrated circuit 200 may functionally utilize a plurality of devices that may include logic, radio frequency, or mixed signal components. Those components may be laid out so that these types of components are physically segregated on the integrated circuit even though they also may be coupled by connections bridging the various sections such as a logic section 201, the flash section 204 and the like.

By placing the radio frequency section 203 components and logic section 201 components in separate triple wells, the sensitive radio frequency components may be isolated from noise emitted by the logic components, for example due to impact ionization and high switching rates.

Referring to Figure 22, a cascode circuit 310 includes a first transistor 312 coupled to a common gate transistor 314 formed in a triple well. The triple well includes a P-well 320, an N-well 318 and a P-type substrate 316. The drain 336 of the transistor 314 is coupled to the output node 330 and the source 334 is coupled via the line 332 to the drain 336 of the transistor 312. The gates 322 of each transistor 312 or 314 are coupled to a gate node 328. The contacts 332 connect to contact diffusions that are formed in the substrate 316. The lines 332 may be coupled to ground. The wells 318 and 320 of the transistor 314 may be coupled through resistors 324 to biased nodes 326.

The use of the triple well applied to the common gate transistor 314 of the cascode 310 reduces the output shunt capacitance to achieve higher output bandwidth. The well 320 may be a lightly doped P-type well inside a lightly doped N-type well 318. The common gate transistor 314 is placed inside the triple well to reduce the output shunt capacitance by adding two series capacitors from the output drain node 330 of the common gate stage to the substrate node. The two series capacitors are formed by the two triple well P-N junctions, i.e. the junction between the P-well 320 and the N-well 318 and the junction between the N-well 318 and substrate 316. The lightly doped nature of the triple well allows further improvement by reducing the capacitance of the resulting P-N junctions. Furthermore, the wells 318 and 320 are biased through high value resistors 324 to maintain isolation between the drain node 330 and substrate 316.

Thus, the cascode circuit 310 may formed in any integrated circuit including those that also include integrated inductors and capacitors, for example to form radio frequency circuits. As a result, the output capacitance is reduced, increasing the available output bandwidth.

Referring next to Figure 23, a plurality of different circuit elements may be formed in a P-type substrate 448, in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention.

For example, a complementary metal oxide semiconductor (CMOS) transistor 410 may be formed over a triple well 412 including a P-well 422 and an N-well 420. The NMOS transistor 418 of the CMOS transistor 410 may include
5 sources and drains 430 and 432, and a gate 434. The PMOS transistor 416 may have sources and drains 424 and 426 formed in a P-well 422 and a gate 428.

In one embodiment, the P-well 422 may be biased by a potential V_D through a resistor 427. Similarly, the N-well
10 420 may be biased by a potential V_A through a resistor 436. The resistors 436 and 427 may have different resistances. The values of those resistances are advantageously greater than 100 ohms and may range from 100 ohms to a few thousand ohms in some embodiments. The potentials V_A and V_D may be
15 the same potential or may be different potentials. In one embodiment, the potentials V_A and V_D may be a supply potential V_{CC} or a ground potential V_{SS} . For example, the potentials V_A and V_D may be supplied through an on-chip pad or connector 460 that may be coupled to a supply voltage V_{CC}
20 via a trace including paths 457 and 459. Alternatively, the potentials V_A and V_D may be may be supplied through a common trace leading to the pad or connection 462 that may be coupled to V_{SS} .

A plurality of devices formed in the same substrate
25 448 may all include well bias in one embodiment of the present invention. In some cases, a single supply voltage

and a single ground voltage may be applied to the wells of the triple wells of a plurality of different devices. However, by coupling a common bias potential to different wells through suitable resistors, such as the resistors 427 and 436, the amount of noise coupling through common traces may be reduced.

The wells of a triple well may share a common connection through a trace to ground or power supply. The common connection trace has finite inductance and resistance that creates a signal path for noise coupling. The common trace reduces the isolation of triple wells especially at higher frequencies, for example, greater than a few MegaHertz. By the inclusion of the resistors in the bias path, the amount of noise coupling may be reduced. The value of the resistors, such as the resistors 436 and 427, may be larger than the triple well capacitive impedance and small enough to supply bias current to allow a stable voltage for the biased well.

A variety of technologies may be used to form the resistors, such as resistors 436 and 427. For example, polysilicon resistors may be utilized in one embodiment. In another embodiment, diffused resistors may be formed in the substrate 448.

The issue of noise coupling is more acute in connection with radio frequency devices. Radio frequency devices are devices that may be formed in the substrate 448

and operate at frequencies of above one MegaHertz.
Examples of radio frequency devices include devices for
forming cellular radios, Bluetooth transceivers,
conventional radios, and wireless radio frequency
5 networking devices, to mention a few examples.

The substrate 448, in one embodiment, may also include
an NMOS transistor 414, having an N-well 438 biased by a
potential V_B through a resistor 446. The potential V_B may
be the same as one or both of the potentials V_D and the
10 potential V_A in one embodiment of the present invention.
The NMOS transistor 414 includes a gate 444. A triple well
is formed by the source and drains 440 and 442, the N-well
438 and the P-type substrate 448.

As used herein, the term "triple well" does not
15 encompass a bipolar transistor. Instead, it is intended to
refer to the formation of a device in wells of at least
three different conductivity types.

As still another example, an integrated inductor, such
as a spiral inductor 454 may be formed over the P-type
20 substrate 448 over a triple well including a P-type well or
tub 452, and an N-type well 450. A resistor 456 may be
coupled to a well bias V_C . As described previously, the
potential V_C may be the same or different as any of the
other potential supplied through resistors or other devices
25 in the substrate 448. In addition, the P-well 452 may also
be biased through a resistor 453 coupled to a potential V_D .

Each of the potentials described herein may be a supply potential which is supplied to a plurality of devices in the substrate 448 or a ground potential which is also supplied to a plurality of devices in the substrate 448.

5 While the present invention has been described with respect to a limited number of embodiments, those skilled in the art will appreciate numerous modifications and variations therefrom. It is intended that the appended claims cover all such modifications and variations as fall
10 within the true spirit and scope of this present invention.

What is claimed is:

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